BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT
CONFERENCE REPORT

SUBJECT: NHDOT Monthly Natural Resource Agency Coordination Meeting
DATE OF CONFERENCE: April 18, 2007
LOCATION OF CONFERENCE: John O. Morton Building
ATTENDED BY:

NHDOT
Kevin Nyhan
Jon Evans
Mike Pouliot
Carol Niewola
Bill Hauser
Russ Lemire
Cathy Goodmen
Don Lyford
Bill Oldenburg
John Kallfelz
Andy Hall
Mark Hemmerlein
Jim Colburn
Erik Paddleford
Alex Vogt

Federal Highway Administration
Bill O'Donnell

Army Corps of Engineers
Rich Roach

DES Wetlands Bureau
Lori Sommer
Gino Infascelli

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Bill Neidermyer

Central NH Regional Planning Commission
Nick Alexander

Nashua Airport
Royce Rankin

FAA
Lisa Lesperance
John Silva

BEC Inc.
Paul Davis

CLD Engineers
Jamie Paine

Gale Associates
Armand Dufresne

PROJECTS REVIEWED THIS MONTH:
(minutes below and on subsequent pages)

(When viewing these minutes online, click on a project to zoom to the minutes for that project)

NOTES ON CONFERENCE:

Finalization of March 21, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Changes were made to the minutes prior to the meeting. No one in attendance provided additional changes. The March 21, 2007 meeting minutes were finalized.

Environmental Assessment for Nashua Airport Runway Improvements, AIP #3-33-0012-28-2007

Armand Dufresne introduced the proposed project explaining that the project is an Environmental Assessment (EA) currently in the scoping stage. The project team was attending this meeting to gather input from the various agencies relative to what alternatives they might wish to have studied and to discuss the types of mitigation they would like to entertain. The presentation included a discussion on the change in airport classification from Airport Reference Code (ARC) BII to ARC CII, which in turn, imposes more demanding design standards on the airport layout.

A. Dufresne then described the history of the project, noting the Airport Master Plans completed in 1989 and 2000, both contained a new parallel runway concept as a means of mitigating future airfield congestion. In 2003 the air traffic controllers at the airport documented a significant number of aircraft operations by C category aircraft (approach speeds from 121 knots or more, but less than 141 knots) necessitating the change to more demanding design standards. This change in ARC precipitated a series of studies to determine how the airport could comply with ARC CII standards. These studies resulted in the elimination of the parallel runway concept, and initiated a review of the runway's length. As a result, the runway's length is proposed to be extended to 6,000 feet from its existing 5,500 feet. Further, the east end of the runway was proposed to be shifted to the west by 115 feet to enable the airport to locate its "localizer" (an electronic device that indicates to an approaching pilot whether the aircraft is aligned in the correct horizontal relationship to the runway centerline) and its critical area to remain on airport property.

A. Dufresne then presented the preliminary determination of potential wetland impacts. He said that the proposal as it stands currently is estimated to impact approximately 14 acres of wetland. A. Dufresne explained that approximately three acres of impact could be attributed to the "glide slope" critical area (the area around an electronic device that indicates to an approaching pilot whether the aircraft is too high or too low relative to the runway elevation). The remainder of the impacts are largely attributable to the Runway Safety Area and the future runway and parallel taxiway construction at the west end of the runway.

The presentation concluded with A. Dufresne commenting that this is one of the busiest general aviation airports in New England and it employs many citizens. Therefore, a primary concern was to maintain the use of the existing runway while the new runway was built. He explained that to accomplish this, the new runway must be a minimum of 300 feet from the existing runway (measured centerline to centerline) as shown on the proposed plan. In the end, the old runway will be removed and the parallel taxiway will be moved so that its centerline is 400 feet from the new runway's centerline. This would allow the main apron to be expanded approximately 100 feet in a northerly direction.

Rich Roach, ACOE, asked if all wetlands at the west end of the runway were disturbed by regular maintenance such as mowing. A. Dufresne responded affirmatively. R. Roach expressed concern that the 115-foot runway shift to the west was to avoid purchase of commercial properties rather than avoid the wetland at the west end of the runway. Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS also expressed this concern. R. Roach was interested in seeing the "whole picture" at both runway ends including the potential taking of commercial lands. He said that the project should include all planned improvements so that the airport is not back before the committee with future incidental impacts.

R. Roach stated that mitigation standards were rising, but that the project was probably permittable and that the proponent should look at the other side of Pennichuck Brook for mitigation opportunities. He further stated that the "Surgewitz farm" in Hollis was potentially available for off-site mitigation and that the creation/restoration of wetlands needs to be "substantial" (30-50 acres) to satisfy 14 acres of impact.

R. Roach warned that improvements or construction should not go beyond Deerwood Drive. A. Dufresne responded that improvements, other than two approach light stations, are all planned for the east side of Deerwood Drive.

R. Roach asked whether Boire Field owed mitigation as a result of prior filling activities. A. Dufresne responded that prior filling near the north apron had been removed and mitigation was provided in the past. R. Roach suggested that the project be reviewed at another resource agency meeting as mitigation and avoidance alternatives are developed.

Lori Sommer, DES Wetlands Bureau, advised that the proponent seek the advice of the Nashua Conservation Commission for mitigation ideas and that the project should continue to look for local mitigation opportunities. She added that improvements to prime wetlands elsewhere could be entertained for mitigation and that wetland restoration/replication on the airport was probably not a good idea. The proponent should consult NH Fish & Game for mitigation opportunities through its Comprehensive Wildlife Action Plan and other habitat related programs.

In response to R. Roach, L. Sommer stated that restoration appears acceptable, provided it results in a net gain of wetland resources and enhancing wet meadows may also be an acceptable form of mitigation. She requested that the proponent check for updated water quality standards (Env-Wt 800) that are in the process of revision. Protecting upland buffers could be accepted as mitigation provided it results in the protection of a resource.

Bill Neidermyer, USF&WS asked why the parallel runway option was dismissed since the training activity still continues at the airport. A. Dufresne responded that the current air traffic controllers do not favor the parallel runway since it presented some complicated aircraft patterns that they did not feel were as safe as the single runway option.

Paul Davis asked what qualified as enhancement. L. Sommer responded that enhancement qualifies if it yields a net increase to the wetland system.

Pembroke, X-A000(414), 14477A

Cathy Goodmen presented an overview of the project, which is located at the intersection of US Route 3, Pembroke Hill Road and Bow Lane, in Pembroke. Heavy traffic volumes traveling at a high rate of speed along US Route 3 make it difficult for traffic to enter the intersection from Bow Lane or Pembroke Hill Road. NHDOT proposes to construct a roundabout at this intersection and re-direct Bow Lane to enter opposite Pembroke Hill Road at the roundabout. There is a small stream, Meetinghouse Brook, that runs under US Route 3 south of the project area and under Bow Lane at the end of the westerly limit of the project area. There should be no impacts to this brook and the new roundabout should not increase runoff entering the brook.

A former Irving gasoline station is located at the northerly corner of Bow Lane and US Route 3. NHDOT is currently in negotiation to purchase this parcel. The gasoline station was closed in 2006, but contaminated soil and contaminated groundwater were discovered. The site will need to be remediated, but additional costs incurred due to contamination is eligible for ODDCF reimbursement by NHDES. NHDOT will consult with NHDES regarding remediation.

John Kallfelz discussed the roundabout design. NHDOT is working with the Town of Pembroke to address safety concerns at this intersection. The town is promoting the roundabout solution.

Lori Sommer asked how the Department would maintain traffic. J. Kallfelz stated that work would be phased to allow alternating one-way traffic.

There are no wetland impacts associated with this project, but the contaminated soil will need to be removed from the former gas station site. This may be done with a separate contract and not be a part of this project. There were no other comments and no objections to the project as proposed.

Walpole-Charlestown, X-A000(487), 14747

Bill Oldenburg provided an overview of the project. This project involves the reconstruction and associated improvements to a 2.7 mile portion of NH Route 12 beginning at Main Street in North Walpole, continuing to NH Route 12A in Charlestown. The roadway is located in proximity to the Connecticut River and an active Amtrak Railroad line. The current roadway is narrow and contains little to no shoulders. Several sections of the roadway embankments are showing signs of deterioration and in some locations have begun sloughing into the Connecticut River. The proposed project is expected to include a shift away from the river as well as the addition of shoulders and widening of the travel way. In order to shift the roadway away from the River and increase the roadway width, right-of-way will need to be acquired and the railroad will need to be shifted to the east of its existing location. Since this railroad is an active rail line, the new rail line will need to be constructed and operational before the existing line can be removed and construction started on the roadway.

NHDOT is working on developing a stakeholders group to provide input during the context sensitive solutions (CSS) process, which will begin this summer. Don Lyford asked if any of the resource agencies would like to be included as stakeholders during the CSS process. The resource agencies present agreed that they did not need to be included in the committee but would like notification of the meetings as well as regular updates at the Natural Resource Agency Coordination meetings throughout the processes. B. Oldenburg added that the hope was that the Connecticut River Joint Commissions would participate as a stakeholder during the CSS process.

Jon Evans indicated that in addition to the river and its associated backwaters, there are several additional areas of wetlands located mainly at the northern end of the project near the NH Route 12A intersection. Once impacts to these and any other wetland areas are known they will be brought back to the resource agencies for review. Additionally, there is some farmland property in this area. Hazardous materials and contamination issues have not yet been evaluated; however there did not appear to be any visual signs of contamination.

B. Oldenburg also noted that there are approximately 6 properties located along the corridor as well as a small car-top boat launch area.

Rich Roach asked if the CSS meetings would be held in the Walpole, Charlestown area. B. Oldenburg responded in the affirmative.

Warren, X-A000(526), 13209

Don Lyford discussed the wetland mitigation proposed on the Woods property for impacts associated with the subject project. The owner is opposed to a 30-acre conservation easement on either side of the property that connects to the National Forest, fearing this is a way of providing user access to the National Forest. The Woods prefer the original area shown across the frontage of the property. Rich Roach noted the Corps permit currently has a condition that the conservation easement connects to the National Forest. During the Corps permit review process EPA felt it would be a good opportunity to maintain a wildlife connection to the adjacent undeveloped National Forest. From initial discussions D. Lyford had with the property owner it appeared they would be receptive to this concept. However, subsequently, the property owner has gone

back to wanting the original configuration: an easement across the frontage. R. Roach stated the permit can be modified to allow the mitigation to be as originally shown.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 6/14/2000, 7/18/2001, 11/21/2001, & 7/16/2003.

Northumberland, 14234 (Non-Federal)

Jamie Paine presented this bridge replacement project, located in the Town of Northumberland. The Town of Northumberland, in cooperation with NHDOT, is proposing to replace twin 72-inch corrugated steel culverts, which carry Roaring Brook under Brooklyn Street at its confluence with the Upper Ammonoosuc River. The culverts are not set well in the ground and currently do not affectively carry stream flow, resulting in the migration of water through the roadway base materials, which causes the erosion of side slopes.

Brooklyn Street currently services a small residential neighborhood on the east side of this project. The neighborhood was developed near a large paper mill owned by Wausua Papers of New Hampshire. The paper mill is located on the Upper Ammonoosuc River, upstream from the project. A short distance downstream from the project, on the Upper Ammonoosuc River, is a covered bridge. In the southern extent of the project, on Brooklyn Street, is a sewer pump station. Due to safety concerns, the roadway is closed at both ends of the double culvert, so that no vehicles can currently pass through the project.

The Brooklyn Street neighborhood was previously bypassed with the construction of NH Route 110, which crosses Roaring Brook approximately 200 feet upstream from the project.

A 31-foot bridge or pre-cast structure option is proposed to replace the double culverts (providing an additional 19 feet of stream opening at this location) and the roadway will be reconstructed to protect its integrity. The proposed structure will provide a natural stream bottom crossing at this location that does not currently exist. The structure will have 45-degree wingwalls in each quadrant to protect the integrity of the structure. Guardrail will be installed along the majority of the river crossing for safety purposes.

Full depth reconstruction of the roadway will include placement of filter fabric beneath stone placed on the side slopes to protect against sediment or fines migrating, paving of the roadway and the adjacent sewer pump station parking lot. In addition, several scour marks in the river downstream from the project will also be repaired. A grass-lined swale will be constructed to help treat storm water before it is discharged to Roaring Brook. In addition, an existing 8-inch sewer line under the embankment will be relocated on the upstream side of Roaring Brook to allow construction of the new bridge.

As a result of the project, the permanent wetland impacts are at approximately 10,200 sq ft.

Lori Sommer asked if wetland impacts could be reduced to less than 10,000 sq ft. If not mitigation would have to be considered. *CLD has further reviewed the project and will reduce permanent impacts to below 10,000 sq ft.*

Gino Infascelli suggested that lowering the road slightly might help to reduce impacts to below the 10,000 sq ft threshold. CLD will consider this when trying to reduce impacts.

Rich Roach indicated that the project would qualify under the ACOE's State Programmatic General Permit (SPGP).

Outside of the comments received above, no one present had concerns with the project as presented.

Jefferson-Randolph, NHS-X-0341(018), 13602

There was no formal presentation for this project, however there was a brief discussion among Lori Sommer, Rich Roach, Bill Neidermyer and Kevin Nyhan regarding the mitigation package. During preliminary design, a mitigation package was discussed and agreed upon for the estimated 1.5 acres of wetland impact associated with safety improvements along a portion of US Route 2. It consists of the transfer of a 30-acre parcel of State-owned land in Jefferson to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. It is adjacent to the Pondicherry Division of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. The preservation of this parcel is a top priority for both the towns of Jefferson and Randolph.

R. Roach confirmed that, even in light of a recent directional shift toward wetland creation/enhancement for mitigation, the ACOE supports the preservation of this parcel. B. Neidermyer and L. Sommer concurred. K. Nyhan will work with the NHDOT Bureau of Right-of-Way and L. Sommer to expedite the transfer of this parcel of land, which the USF&WS is anxious to have.

This project was previously reviewed on the following dates: 4/17/2002, 8/21/2002, 2/19/2003, 3/19/2003, 4/16/2003, 10/15/2003, 2/18/2004, 6/23/2004, 7/21/2004, 11/2/2005 & 2/21/2006.

Manchester-Concord, A000(456), 14510Z

Jon Evans and Jim Colburn began by giving an overview of the project. The proposed project consists of the installation of fiber optic cable and conduit along Interstate 93 from Exit 13 in Concord to the southern I-93 / I-293 junction in Manchester. The cable will be used to implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) in the region. ITS implementation will include the installation of variable message boards, radio alert systems, cameras and traffic data. The ITS system will communicate through the proposed fiber optic cables which will tie into the existing lines, currently installed between the NH Route 106 Emergency Management Center and Exit 13 in Concord. In order to avoid areas of bedrock, the proposed cable will be installed mainly along the eastern side of the roadway several feet off the existing edge of pavement. Most of the cable will be installed by digging a narrow ditch approximately 4 feet deep and placing three, two inch ducts with periodic hubs and pull boxes for maintenance and access. Directional borings will be used to pass beneath cross streets and small wetland systems. In areas such as Stevens Pond in Manchester and the Merrimack River, the cable will be installed to the underside of the existing bridge structures.

J. Evans added that Gino Infascelli of the NH Wetlands Bureau had previously indicated that directional boring beneath wetlands would not require a permit as long as it was deep enough to not disturb the surface water and underlying wetland soils.

G. Infascelli noted that there are several “prime wetlands” located in proximity to the roadway in Hooksett near the rest area and the toll plaza. One location is to the north of the rest area on the opposite side of the highway from the proposed work and is therefore not expected to be impacted by this project. The remaining two prime wetlands are an unnamed pond to the south of the rest area and Pinnacle Pond to the north of the toll plaza. J. Evans noted that work would be conducted in these areas as close to the edge of pavement as possible and proper erosion control measures would be in place prior to construction. J. Evans and G. Infascelli agreed that this was a similar situation to the federal resurfacing projects and therefore concluded that guidance sent to the Bureau of Environment on February 13, 2004 could be used to determine if a permit was necessary. (The above noted February 13, 2004 e-mail correspondence from G. Infascelli indicates that as long as prime wetlands are at least 10 feet from the proposed work area, the project does not impact the water or banks of any prime wetlands, additional pavement widths do not exceed six inches and the overall existing use of the roadway does not change, the project would not require

a permit.) G. Infascelli added that as long as the cable is installed within several feet of the existing edge of pavement, the project would not require a wetlands permit for work in close proximity to a prime wetland. The NHDOT Bureau of Environment will review and compare final construction plans with the above noted prime wetland information in order to assure compliance with the February 13, 2004 memo.

J. Evans noted that several threatened or endangered plant and animal communities had been identified by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau (NHNHB) in proximity to the project area. As all work associated with this project will be located several feet off the existing edge of pavement, none of these species or communities are expected to be negatively impacted by the proposed project. (*Later e-mail correspondence with Kim Tuttle of NH Fish and Game verified that this project is not likely to have an effect on any of the endangered or threatened species noted by the NHNHB.*)

J. Evans also added that there were several large wetlands located within the I-89/I-93 interchange loops. The current design calls for cables to be placed through the eastern loops. Since the Department is trying to avoid wetland impacts, the cables will likely be shifted to the roadway shoulder or directional borings would be used.

Rich Roach confirmed that if this project were to require a wetlands permit, the impacts would be minimal and therefore would qualify for coverage under the State of NH Programmatic General Permit (SPGP), if it was determined the ACOE had jurisdiction.

Bedford, 13527 (Non-Federal)

Trent Zanes presented an overview of this project, which involves the replacement of NH Bridge No. 189/121 carrying US Route 3 over the F.E. Everett Turnpike. Associated approach work includes widening Route 3 to a 4-lane section. Off-line reconstruction is likely with traffic maintained on the existing bridge. Due to limited ROW south of the bridge, a northern relocation is more feasible than to the south, however both options will be studied. A longer span is anticipated to accommodate potential turnpike widening. No wetlands impacts have been identified. (No wetlands within the project area.)